And what of the mother of the monster,  
the Pandora’s box of her womb? What crack  
in the world did she peer through to impress  
this upon her child: eagle’s foot and horned  
head, serpents dripping from its waist, bat wings  
folded over a superfluous eye?  

What can we say for the mother except  
from the egg, all—newt and rodent, human  
and worm? What could she know of genetics:  
cistrons that pump out seven hearts, twin mouths,  
or a form more common, more humble? What  
could she do but watch while her infant starved?  

What could she do but what we all do—hold  
our faults close, their names like stones on our tongues?